Chapter VII

TELEOLOGICAL HOLISM: J. S. HALDANE, WHITE-HEAD, SMUTS, STERN, HOBHOUSE, MYERS

THE AUTHORS of this group have in common with the organicists the rejection of both Mechanism and Vitalism and the insistence on the wholeness of the organism; but they are widely separated from the organicists by their recognition of the teleological nature of some or all of the organism's activities. Their rejection of Mechanism is, then, more radical than that of the authors of the group reviewed in the foregoing chapter. The latter, or most of them, admit the possibility or even the ultimate necessity of finding explanations of vital pheno-mena in terms of physics and chemistry as now under-stood ; while those of the group now under review pro-claim the impossibility, in principle, of such explanation,

Yet they are not dualists, animists, or vitalists; though vitalism is commonly and erroneously imputed to them.

Limitations of space compel me to be very brief and to attempt only to indicate what may be called the central position of this group, best represented, I think, by Haldane and Whitehead. Neglecting the considerable differences of opinion within the group, the keynote of their criticism of the mechanist position is that the physical sciences as now existing are the product of a long abstracting process. Abstract description, such as these sciences render of the physical world, is one

which neglects or leaves out of account essential aspects of that which is described. In reality, these authors maintain, physical